



# LaSalle cancer within norm

## Study compares case rate to similar populace in state

By CAROLYN KUMA  
Niagara Gazette

Incidence of cancer in the LaSalle section of Niagara Falls are not significantly higher than in any comparable urban area in New York state, a state Health Department report says.

In several cases, the report found LaSalle to have lower incidences of the disease than other urban sections of the state.

"We're saying it (cancer incidence) is not dangerous; we're not saying it's safe," said Holly Howe, director of the health department's cancer surveillance programs. "But for the years we've examined, we found no excess of cancer."

The health department began the study in December 1984, after a request by residents living in neighborhoods south of the CECOS International Inc. landfill. The health department studied cancer incidences in U.S. census tracts 219, where the concerned residents live, and tracts 220 and 221 using the state cancer registry from 1973-1982.

Tract 219 is bordered by the LaSalle Expressway to the south, 70th Street to the east, Niagara Junction railroad line to the west, and Niagara Falls Boulevard to the north. Tract 220 encompasses an area from the LaSalle Expressway (north), 72nd Street (east); the railroad line (west) toward the Niagara River (south).

Tract 221 is bordered by 70th Street (west), the LaSalle Expressway (south), 80th Street (east) and the city line (north).

The cancer registry contains information on all cases of the disease reported by hospi-

tals and physicians to the state Health Department, as mandated by law.

Ms. Howe said results of the local cancer study were calculated by determining the ages and number of males and females in the 1980 population of the census tracts. The department then determined whether the number of actual cancer cases exceeded the number statistically expected in similar populations.

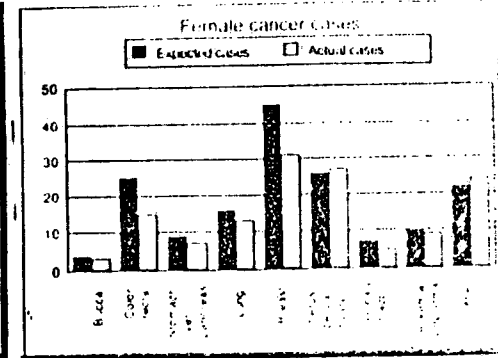
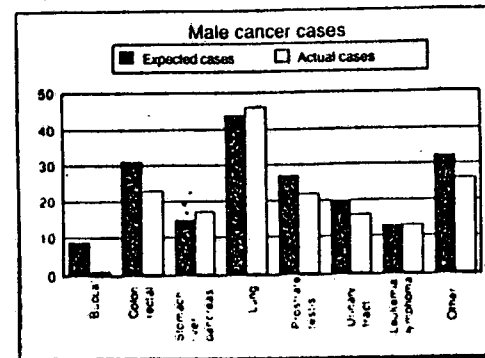
"We were looking for a dangerous situation, for a true doubling of statistics in the area," Ms. Howe said. "If we saw a true doubling, we'd be alarmed. With the small number of cases we had, we can't say it's safe, just that it's not dangerous."

Howe added that it is difficult to link cancer to environmental causes because of the latency period of the disease. Local cancer sufferers may have been exposed to cancer-causing agents 10 to 20 years prior to their inclusion in the cancer registry, she said.

"So we don't know the risk for people in the last two years. The picture might change in several years," she said.

The report says the health department will continue to monitor cancer cases in Niagara Falls. While continued monitoring is not expected to change the conclusion that there is no excess of cancer here, it could help explain why the rate is lower than expected, the report says.

Reasons for the low rate could be unusual migration or aging patterns within the area, the manner in which statistics were calculated, incomplete reporting or changes in reporting of cancer cases to the registry, the report said.



A state Health Department study of cancer rates in LaSalle found actual cases were not significantly higher than statistically similar urban areas in New York state.

## Study classified cancers by type and normal rate

By CAROLYN KUMA  
Niagara Gazette

The state Health Department found 298 incidences of cancer in the LaSalle section of Niagara Falls.

Using the department's statistical criteria for determining cancer incidence, 354 cases were expected. Consequently, state health officials say the area has fewer incidents of cancer than other comparable urban areas in the state.

For men, there were 164 cases of cancer observed, while 191 were expected. For women, 134 cases were observed and 163 expected. The total number of cancer cases, as well as the number observed in women, were significantly lower than expected, a new report said.

The number of cancer cases in men was also low, but those figures are of borderline significance, according to the report.

In all three tracts studied in Niagara Falls, the types of cancer most commonly diagnosed in men were lung (46 cases observed, 44 expected), reproductive organs (22 observed, 27 expected), colo-rectal (23 observed, 31 expected), and urinary tract (16 observed, 20 expected).

In men, the incidence of buccal (oral) cancer was significantly lower than expected, the report said. One case was observed while nine were expected.

The types of cancer most commonly diagnosed in women were breast (31 observed, 45 expected), lung (13 observed, 16 expected), reproductive organs (27 observed, 26 expected) and colo-rectal (15 observed, 25 expected).

There were 113 cancer deaths among males in all three census tracts, while 97 were expected. Among women, 77 deaths were reported and 73 deaths expected.